



Research Integrity

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Public trust
in scientific
research

Enhancing
reputation

Publishing
quality
content

Research Integrity at Sage

Safeguarding from
problematic content

Protecting
reputation

Impact of
problematic
research on society

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The Sage approach- prompt and proactive



It is our responsibility to address the problems in our content



While lots of retractions are a reputational risk, no retractions also question reputation



There is a lot of attention on flagging problematic content, and how journals and publishers act

Early detection of ethics issues is desirable

Hindawi reveals process for retracting more than 8,000 paper mill articles

A cancer researcher said she collected blood from 98 people. It was all her own.

nature
Explore content ▾ About the journal ▾ Pub
[nature](#) > [news](#) > article

NEWS | 12 December 2023

More than 10,000 research papers were retracted in 2023 – a new record

The number of articles being retracted rose sharply this year. Integrity experts say this is only the tip of the iceberg.

THE SCHOLARLY
kitchen
What's Hot and Cooking In Scholarly Publishing
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Guest Post – GPT-3 Wrote an Entire Paper on Itself. Should Publishers be Concerned?

Journal retracts 122 papers at once

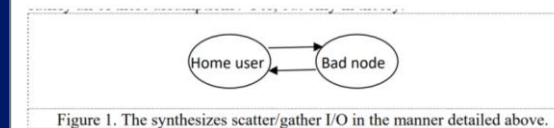
IJEEE
International Journal of Electrical Engineering & Education
0(0) 1–12
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DOI: 10.1177/00207179211064059
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SAGE

A new journal record: Sage title retracts 678 more papers, tally over 1,500

Retraction: Physio-metabolic and clinical consequences of wearing face masks—Systematic review with meta-analysis and comprehensive evaluation

Alzheimer's diagnosis paper retracted for failure to disclose conflicts of interest, other issues

Publisher retracting five papers because of “clear evidence” that they were “computer generated”



Types of Publishing Ethics Concerns

Individual study level concerns

- Recycling published content
- Using unattributed content
- Irrelevant/non-existent references
- Missing appropriate approvals
- Tortured phrases
- Undeclared use of AI
- Spurious email domains
- Fabricated or reused images

Concerns visible in batches

- Duplicate submissions
- Citation stacking
- Fabricated recommended reviewers
- Suspicious third-party submitters
- Sold authorship slots

Wider ecosystem concerns

- Hijacked journals
- Fake acceptance letters
- Editor bribes



Ethics investigations are a key part
of upholding Research Integrity

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Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)



Guidance

- Provides **advice and guidance** on best practice for dealing with ethical issues
- Members can receive advice through forums, newsletters, cases database, flowcharts etc.

Membership

- Sage is a COPE member
- Journals with Sage can register for COPE membership
- Mary Ann Liebert and IOS Press journals will be taken through the process of applying for COPE membership- any specific questions can be directed to your Sage contact

Responsibilities

- Apply COPE's Principles
- Use the COPE resources and engage in forums to improve and maintain high ethical standards
- Journals should have a well-defined complaints process

COPE Member Resources



- [Getting started in publication ethics](#)
 - [Ethics toolkit for a successful editorial office](#)
 - [A short guide to ethical editing for new Editors](#)
 - [COPE Newsletter](#) – updates on new guidance and resources/events
- [COPE Guidance](#) – various types of guidance documents on different publication ethics scenarios (e.g., case studies, flow charts, guidelines, COPE position, webinars, etc.)
- [COPE Focus](#) – collections of resources for specific topics
- [COPE Forum](#) – anonymous cases brought by Members to be discussed between participants of the Forum – e.g., when Editors suspect AI
- [COPE eLearning](#) – 10 modules designed to equip editors with tools and knowledge needed to address issues they may face on their journals
- [Publication Integrity week](#) – sessions from previous years available to watch online

Sage's external facing [Publication ethics policies](#) and internal Research Integrity investigation processes are guided by [COPE recommendations](#).

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General workflows for investigations



How does Sage RI support EICs in ethics investigations?

The Sage RI team works alongside EICs to:



Investigate concerns

Investigate all complaints

Conduct an unbiased, evidence-based review for all complaints or responses



Maintain editorial independence

Ensure that editorial decisions remain with editors unless policies are breached

Conduct investigations with appropriate Editor involvement



Ensure transparency

Ensure an adequate level of transparency in investigation outcomes while also maintaining confidentiality as required

Draft post-publication notices according to COPE guidelines



Provide expert support

Ensure that journals are prepared to tackle RI issues with robust policies

Provide support for handling complaints and media queries

How does Sage RI support EICs in ethics investigations?– outcomes

Version of Record

- An article published in its final form is considered the 'Version of Record' (VoR)
- Sage is committed to preserving the integrity and transparency of the VoR, which includes any post-publication corrections

Post-Publication Notices

- Sage issues post-publication notices to address any changes to the VoR that include:
 1. Errors or omissions that impact readability, indexing or compliance to Sage or journal policy
 2. Errors or concerns related to the validity or integrity of the article

Notice Types

- Retraction
- Correction
- Expression of concern
- Removal (considered in a very limited set of circumstances)

Sources of Publishing Ethics concerns

No matter the source of concerns, anonymous or otherwise, each case flagged is to be considered seriously, validated and investigated.

Internal Sources

- iThenticate
- UADT report
 - Detects and reports on unusual activity on journal submissions
 - Should not be shared externally
- Reviewer reports
- Journal Health checks
- Routine RI monitoring

External Sources

- PubPeer comments
- Complaints on media like X or LinkedIn
- Direct complaints/ institutional investigations
- Concerns flagged by institutions like Clarivate
- Whistleblowers

Key Publishing Ethics Policies (Overview)

No changes to
Author Byline
after Accept

No
recommended
reviewers

Post-Publication
Correction
Policy

Sage Retractions
Policy

Complaints and
Appeals Policy

Editorial
Independence

Letters to Editor,
Critiques

Conflicts of
Interest

AI Policy-
assertive and
generative AI

Citation-
manipulation-
policy

Key Research Integrity Policies at Sage



No changes to author byline after accept

Increased oversight of author changes during peer-review and oversight by the RI team

Strengthened guidance of authorship changes during peer review



No recommended reviewers

We should be able to lean on peer review if there are complaints

Should be 2 independent reviewers



Post-Publication Correction Policy

Fewer correction notices due to minor and/or VPM errors

Increased oversight of author requested changes to Production



Sage Retractions Policy

Retractions will be considered if authors cannot be verified, or peer review manipulated, conclusions unreliable

Corrections are appropriate if conclusions remain intact

Key Research Integrity Policies at Sage



Complaints and Appeals Policy

Complaints about journals, editors or content investigated in line with COPE

Appeals to Retractions- must provide evidence



Editorial Independence

Editors can consider publishing content regardless of commercial interests of the publisher but must ensure academic rigor



Letters to Editor, Critiques

Importance of correcting the original article if there are errors

Importance of due process to all parties



Conflicts of Interest

Not limited to financial conflicts



Citation Manipulation Policy

Manipulation of citations (excessive self-citation, gift citation), coercive citations

May lead to manuscript rejection, removal from review/decision making roles, and/or notification to institutions

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AI Policy at Sage

- Assistive AI – improvement of language, structure, or grammar of article
 - Do not require disclosure
- Generative AI – artificially creating or generating data, references, text, images, etc.
 - Must be disclosed at submission
 - Accuracy of all outputs should be verified and original sources checked by authors
- Prohibited use of AI
 - If Editor becomes aware that GenAI used inappropriately in manuscript preparation without disclosure, reserve right to reject
 - Reviewers must not use ChatGPT or GenAI to generate review reports
 - Editors must not use GenAI tools to generate decision letters or summarises of unpublished research
 - Consider peer-review confidentiality
- [Artificial intelligence policy](#)

Editor Responsibility

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Editor Responsibility

Conflicts of Interest

To disclose COI when submitting their own work to their journal

To recuse themselves from reviewing their own work or work of past collaborators

Peer Review and Decision making

To triage/reject out of scope papers

To provide fair decision making in line with reviewer comments

End statements

To ensure correct ethical disclosures are included for human/animal studies

To check funding, COI, data related disclosures

Handling sensitive content

To seek advice from Editorial Board Members rather than handling sensitive material alone

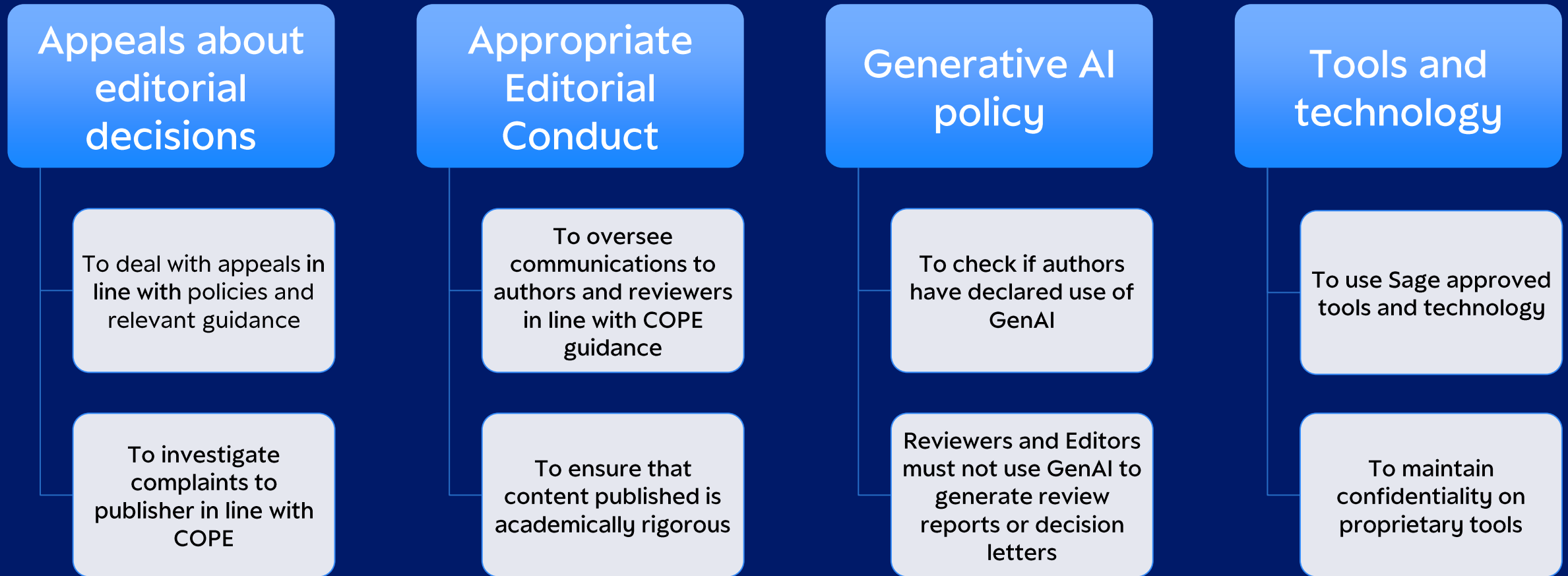
To escalate any complaints and/or media queries to Sage contact

Journalist queries

To reach out to Sage contact initially for guidance

To consider journal's reputation before making any comments

Editor Responsibility



Contacting Sage Research Integrity Team

publication_ethics@sagepub.com

- Sage's external facing email address listed on [complaints and appeals policy](#)
- This can be used by Sage Journal Editors, Complainants and Authors for initial communication.

sageresearchintegrity@sagepub.com

- This email is used for further communication on ongoing cases once acknowledged by the team.

Questions?

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Resources

COPE

- <https://publicationethics.org>
- <https://publicationethics.org/guidance/guideline/retraction-guidelines>

Sage Links

- <https://www.sagepub.com/journals/publication-ethics-policies/ethics-responsibility>
- <https://www.sagepub.com/journals/information-for-editors/editor-guide-to-peer-review-best-practice>
- <https://www.sagepub.com/journals/information-for-editors/editor-guide-to-sage-editorial-publishing-policies>

